

The Book Of Revelation Study 57

Revelation 11:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

PROMISE OF COMMUNION

Bound up in the Seventh trumpet is the promise to believers of unbroken fellowship with God forever. That fellowship is symbolized by the images of verse 19

The opening of **the temple of God which is in heaven**

The place where His presence dwells, and this reveals **the ark of the covenant**.

The ark symbolizes that the covenant God has promised to men is now available in its fullness.

In the midst of the fury of His judgment on unbelievers, God, as it were, throws open the Holy of Holies (where the ark was located): (*Ex 26:33-34; 1 Chron 5:7*) and draws believers into His presence.

It would have been unthinkable in the Old Testament temple, when only the high priest entered the Holy of Holies once a year;

Hebrews 9:7 (NKJV)

⁷ But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance;

The ark symbolizes God's communion with the redeemed because it was there that blood sacrifices were offered to atone for men's sin. Also it was from above the ark that God spoke to Moses (*Num 7:89*)

The ark was called the ark of testimony

Exodus 25:22 (NKJV)

²² And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.

It is called the ark of God, and the ark of God's strength;

Psalms 132:8 (NKJV)

⁸ Arise, O Lord, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your strength.

Inside it was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tablets of the covenant;

Hebrews 9:4 (NKJV)

⁴ which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant;

All of this symbolized that God would supply His people, was sovereign over His people, gave His law to His people, and entered into an eternal saving covenant with His people.

But along with the ark in the heavenly temple **there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.**

Similar events are associated with God's majestic glorious heavenly throne;

Revelation 4:5 (NKJV)

⁵ And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

Revelation 8:5 (NKJV)

⁵ Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.

Revelation 16:17-18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!"

¹⁸ And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.

These images are always associated with judgment.

Heaven is the source of vengeance on unbelievers, as well as covenant blessing for the redeemed.

The message then of the seventh trumpet is that Jesus Christ is the sovereign King of kings and Lord of lords.

He will one day take the rule of the earth away from the usurper, Satan, and from earth's petty human rulers.

History is moving inexorably toward its culmination in Christ's earthy reign. When He returns, He will bring covenant blessings to the redeemed, but eternal judgment to those who reject Him.

In the light of that sobering truth Peter exclaimed.

2 Peter 3:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

THE WAR OF THE AGES PART 1 THE PRELUDE

Revelation 12:1-6 (NKJV)

¹ Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.

² Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

³ And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.

⁴ His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

⁵ She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.

⁶ Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

The Bible warns:

Proverbs 16:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.

The most notorious and tragic illustration of that principle, the one with the most far-reaching consequences, was Satan's prideful rebellion against God

By it Lucifer, having fallen from heaven like lightning,

Luke 10:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

Was cast down from his exalted position as the "anointed cherub who covers"

Ezekiel 28:14-15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ "You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.

¹⁵ You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you.

He forfeited his place as the highest created being and became the supreme enemy of God.

Satan's rebellion touched off a cosmic war throughout the universe, a war dwarfing any other war in human experience.

Satan's war against God is a two front war.

By leading mutiny against God among the angels, Satan attempted unsuccessfully to destroy the paradise of heaven.

By leading a mutiny against God among men, Satan destroyed the earthly paradise of the Garden of Eden. He plunged the whole human race into decay and corruption, and usurped (temporarily) the role of the "ruler of this world"

John 12:31 (NKJV)

³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

The opening campaign of Satan's war of the ages took place in heaven.

When he rebelled;

Isaiah 14:12-15 (NKJV)

¹² "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!

¹³ For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north;

¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'

¹⁵ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.

Ezekiel 28:12-17 (NKJV)

¹² "Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord God: "You were the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

¹³ *You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes Was prepared for you on the day you were created.*

¹⁴ *"You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.*

¹⁵ *You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you.*

¹⁶ *"By the abundance of your trading You became filled with violence within, And you sinned; Therefore I cast you as a profane thing Out of the mountain of God; And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the fiery stones.*

¹⁷ *"Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, That they might gaze at you.*

When this happened one third of the angels foolishly and wickedly cast their lots with him. Now listen none of them could have known what the eternal consequences of their choice would be.

Wanting to be like God, they became as much unlike Him as possible.

These fallen angels (or demons) became Satan's storm troopers, doing the bidding of their evil commander. They fight against divine purpose, making war with both the holy angels and the human race.

When Adam and Eve plummeted into corruption by choosing to listen to Satan's lies and disobey God, the human race became embroiled in the cosmic war of the ages.

In fact, since the Fall the earth has been the primary theater in which that war has been fought.

Though already fallen, every member of the human race faces the same choice as the angels did in eternity past; To fight on God's side or on Satan's, Remaining neutral is not an option, for in Matthew Jesus declared;

Matthew 12:30 (NKJV)

³⁰ *He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.*

The final battles of Satan's long war against God are yet to be fought.

They will take place in the future, during the last half of the seven year tribulation period, the time the Jesus called the Great Tribulation.

At the same time Satan, aided by the absence of the Church and the presence of increased demon hordes, will mount his most desperate assaults against God's purposes and His people.

But they will not succeed.

The Lord Jesus Christ will effortlessly crush Satan and his forces;

Revelation 19:11-21 (NKJV)

¹¹ *Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.*

¹² *His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.*

¹³ *He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.*

¹⁴ *And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.*

¹⁵ *Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.*

¹⁶ *And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*
¹⁷ *Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,*
¹⁸ *that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great."*
¹⁹ *And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.*
²⁰ *Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.*
²¹ *And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.*

Note that God will send him to the abyss for the duration of the millennial kingdom;

Revelation 20:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.*
² *He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;*

After leading a final rebellion at the close of the Millennium, Satan will be consigned to eternal punishment in the lake of fire;

Revelation 20:3 (NKJV)

³ *and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.*

Revelation 20:7-10 (NKJV)

⁷ *Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison*
⁸ *and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.*
⁹ *They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.*
¹⁰ *The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

The sounding of the seventh trumpet will proclaim the triumphant victory of the Lord Jesus Christ over the usurper, Satan;

Revelation 11:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ *Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"*

There will be joy in heaven because Christ has defeated Satan and established His eternal kingdom. Thus the outcome of the war between Satan and God is not in doubt. Christ's ultimate triumph is certain.

Though *chapter 11* records the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the effects it produces are not described until *chapters 15-18*.

The seventh trumpet will sound near the end of the Tribulation, launching the brief, but final and devastating bowl judgments just before Christ's return in power and glory.

Chapters 6-11 describe the events of the Tribulation up to the sounding of the seventh trumpet; *Chapters 12-14* recapitulate that same period, describing events from Satan's vantage point.

In addition, the latter section take the reader all the way back to the original rebellion of Satan (*12:3-4*).

The chronological narrative of the Tribulation events then resumes in *chapter 15*

The Tribulation will feature both the unprecedented judgments of God's eschatological wrath and the desperate fury of Satan's efforts to thwart God's purposes.

The deadly combination will make the Tribulation the most devastating period in human history

Matthew 24:21-22 (NKJV)

²¹ *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

²² *And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.*

During that time, horrifying events will take place, caused both by God's judgments and by Satan's fury.

Before describing that final war, the inspired apostle John first introduces the main characters involved in it:

The woman (Israel), the dragon (Satan), and the male child (Jesus Christ).

THE WOMAN

Revelation 12:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ *Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.*

² *Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.*

The first thing John saw in this vision was a **great sign**, the first of seven signs in the last half of Revelation.

Mega (great) appears repeatedly in this vision;

Revelation 12:3 (NKJV)

³ *And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.*

Revelation 12:9 (NKJV)

⁹ *So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

Revelation 12:12 (NKJV)

¹² *Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."*

Revelation 12:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ *But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.*

Everything John saw seemed to be huge either in size or in significance.

Semeion (sign) describes a symbol that points to a reality.

The literal approach to interpreting Scripture allows for normal use of symbolic language, but understands that it points to a literal reality.

In this case, the description plainly shows that the woman John saw was not an actual woman.

Also, the reference to “the rest of her children,” those” who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus shows that this **woman** is a symbolic mother.

Revelation 12:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ *And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

This **woman** is the second of four symbolic women identified in Revelation.

The first, though an actual woman, had the symbolic name Jezebel (*2:20*) She was a false teacher and symbolizes paganism.

The third symbolic woman, depicted as a harlot, appears in (*17:1-7*). She represents the apostate church.

The fourth symbolic woman, is depicted in (*19:7-8*) as the bride of the Lamb and represents the true church.

In this second woman, who here depicts Israel make us remember that in the Old Testament Israel was pictured as the adulterous wife of the Lord

Jeremiah 3:1 (NKJV)

¹ *"They say, 'If a man divorces his wife, And she goes from him And becomes another man's, May he return to her again?' Would not that land be greatly polluted? But you have played the harlot with many lovers; Yet return to Me," says the Lord.*

Ezekiel 16:32-35 (NKJV)

³² *You are an adulterous wife, who takes strangers instead of her husband.*

³⁴ *You are the opposite of other women in your harlotry, because no one solicited you to be a harlot. In that you gave payment but no payment was given you, therefore you are the opposite."*

³⁵ *'Now then, O harlot, hear the word of the Lord!*

If we were to make a study of this we would find that ultimately the Lord will restore this wayward wife to himself.

Israel's presence during the seventieth week of Daniels prophecy is in keeping with God's promises to her of a kingdom

And we will look at this again or next time together.